



The PSBA Buzz

Monthly Meetings are held
every 4th Tuesday
(except July, Nov, Dec)

Graham Visitor Center of
Washington Arboretum.
2200 Arboretum Drive E.,
Seattle, WA 98112

We're on the Web!
www.pugetsoundbees.org
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Hive Calendar

In April: Install Packages of bees. Make sure to provide syrup to new packages installed on undrawn foundation.

Nectar Sources in April: Dandelion & Clover, Maple, Scotts Broom (pollen), Raspberry, Heather, Apple, Alder (pollen).

Cold snaps or extended rainy weather may cause starvation or robbing, so be prepared to feed your colonies. Install packages on foundation approx. mid April and feed until the brood nest (2 deeps or 3 westerns) are fully drawn. If brood nest is fully drawn add supers when the fruiting (not flowering) cherries bloom or, alternatively, when the local Maple nectar flow begins. If medicating in the spring, install and remove per manufacturer's directions. Our climate makes Autumn a much better time to medicate. Apistan must be removed before supering. Coumaphous must be removed 14 days before supering. Formic Acid Gel packs must be removed 28 days before supering.

April Meeting:

- ❖ *Beginner Lesson: 6:30-7:00pm Swarms and Swarm Management – Sarah Cooke*
- ❖ *Announcements: 7:00-7:15 Get the latest info on what's happening with PSBA*
- ❖ *General Meeting 7:30–9:00pm WSU Master Gardener and beekeeper Paul Bryant will discuss pollinator-friendly plants and how to design your garden*

Bee Lunch

By Jeff Steenbergen



The Big Leaf Maple is a fast growing northwest native tree found between the Cascades and the coastline. This tree provides summer shade and an inescapable downpour of leaves in Fall.

The Big Leaf Maple is the largest of the maple varieties in the area and the blooms of these giant trees can create a minor nectar flow if we get several days of sunshine in a row. On a sunny spring day be sure to listen for the hum of the bees under a Big Leaf Maple!

Contents Title:

Hive Calendar-----	1
Bee Lunch-----	1
President's Message-----	2
Noteworthy News-----	2
Hive Splitting-----	3
Volunteering-----	3
Education and Research-----	4

President's Message

By Krista Conner

Spring has officially sprung here in Puget Sound and hopefully your bees are flying. If they aren't, rest assured you are not alone in discovering deadouts this Spring. There's been much buzz in the news about continued colony losses, lawsuits and controversy over pesticides (see "Noteworthy" section of this newsletter) and I hear mixed reports of overwintering success from our members. One thing is for sure – everyone wants to find a way to help honey bees thrive!

With the increased and global concern for honey bees, my response is to focus on things I personally can do to support honey bees; continuing to learn about them, trying new strategies in managing my colonies and sharing with others the importance of honey bees. I also see how PSBA can play a key role in all these activities by enabling us all to take steps which help honeybees regardless of our different approaches and levels of experience in keeping bees.

Before you become distracted by this season's beekeeping tasks, I encourage you to complete the survey at www.beeinformed.org to support research on colony losses and improving overwintering success.

In addition, don't forget to sign up for PSBA's Field Day (May 18th) with Randy Oliver of www.scientificbeekeeping.com. Field Day offers you the opportunity to learn directly from a beekeeping expert and researcher of honeybees. Early registration is appreciated so we can gauge best setup for the afternoon learning stations and needed supplies.

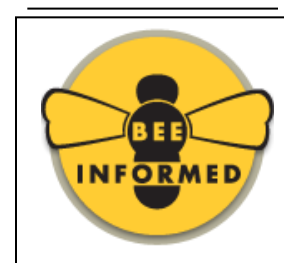
Lastly – PSBA will be visiting several festivals this year to share information about bees & beekeeping with the public, I hope you will help by volunteering!



PSBA President:
Krista Conner

PSBA mentioned in
PCC's "Sound
Consumer"

http://www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/sc/1304/bee_farmers.html



Fill out the
Beeinformed.org
Survey by April 15!

**Celebrate Earth
Day with PSBA
at Newcastle Earth
Day 2013
Celebration!**

April 20th at Lake
Boren Park in
Newcastle, WA from
10am – 3pm

**Join the fun by
Volunteering!**

volunteer@psbees.org

Noteworthy News and Action Items

- **Washington State Beekeepers – Must Register Hives:**
<http://agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/Apiary/>
- **Miss February's PSBA meeting?** You can see Daniel Najera's presentation here: <https://tegr.it/y/10n0t>. (note that this program may not work on all computers.)
- **New York Times article on honey bee losses:**
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/29/science/earth/soaring-bee-deaths-in-2012-sound-alarm-on-malady.html?hp&_r=0
- **Beekeepers Sue EPA over bee losses:**
<http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/03/20/epa-sued-over-ongoing-bee-losses>
- **Pesticides found to effect learning ability of honey bees:**
<http://westernfarmpress.com/management/honey-bee-brain-impacted-pesticides>
- **EPA Formally Issues Section 3 Registration for Apivar®**
<http://wasba.org/epa-formally-issues-section-3-registration-for-apivar/>

Hive Splitting for Swarm Control

By Jeff Steenbergen

Overwintered colonies will soon explode in numbers and can quickly make plans to swarm due to congestion in the hive.

Each colony is unique in how fast it will build up, and it is necessary to make inspections every 7-10 days to check for swarm cells.

However, there is another option to consider as a swarm preventative, which is to make a split.

There are many ways to split a colony - the simplest is to equally divide all the resources into two hives, ensuring both have eggs and young larvae. The colony without the queen will create emergency queen cells from young larvae. Another way to split a colony is to take several frames and the queen from the colony and make a nuc, letting the stronger colony make queen cells.

Timing is important- ideally, make a split when the colony is strong enough and there are plenty of drones available (for the new queen to mate). Some colonies will be ready to split in late April and others early June so you have to watch the weather. In any case, start a split before the first major nectar flow.

After making a split, inspect in about a week to confirm queen cells (made in the queenless colony) are close to being capped. Seeing multiple cells indicates everything is going well - a new queen will emerge in the next week. Leave the colony alone for 2-3 weeks to allow the new queen to emerge, go on mating flights, and start laying eggs. It will take another three weeks for eggs to develop into workers and you can then confirm if the new queen has a good laying pattern.

Splitting a colony is an effective way to prevent swarming since congestion in the hive is reduced and there are about 2 months before the colony population builds back up again.

There are also a few other advantages to making splits:

- You build on the genetics of your overwintered colonies and can raise a new locally mated queen.
- The queenless colony goes through a brood break which can help with lower varroa mite loads and brood diseases.
- You now have a nuc backup in case something happens to one of your queens, or as a resource

you can sell to another beekeeper.

- The brood break allows the workforce of your queenless colony to focus resources on nectar and pollen collection and can potentially boost your harvest if timed correctly with the flow.

There are also many things that can go wrong when making a colony queenless so be sure to consult with an experienced beekeeper or mentor before starting. Good luck!

PSBA Seeks Volunteers for Fun!

By Gail Eshom

All PSBA activities are run by volunteers -monthly meetings, apiary maintenance, equipment rental, seasonal fair booths, governance, newsletter, and website, to name a few. Thanks go out to many of you who already volunteer on a regular basis. Let it be known you do not need to be an experienced beekeeper to volunteer for any of these activities. Your willingness to help out, have fun, and learn more about bees is all you need to be an asset to the club.

Two special events coming up will require a group of volunteers to create excellent learning opportunities from which we all can benefit. Two well-known beekeeping experts will spend a Saturday with us, teaching both in the lecture room and in the apiary. Randy Oliver arrives for Field Day on May 18th and Michael Bush visits on Sept. 14th. Prior to these events PSBA needs your assistance in preparing the apiary and assembling attendee packets, and, on the day of, help setting up and cleaning up various learning stations.

Please consider participating in these ways. Detailed sign-up sheets will be available at the April meeting. You can also contact me, Gail Eshom, volunteer coordinator, at volunteer@pugetsoundbees.org.



Kim Thomas volunteering at Seattle Tilth Harvest Fest, 2012

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PSBA Education and Research, *By Danny Najera*

As the Chair of both the Education and Research Committees for PSBA, I want to share what we will be focusing on. To me, both research and education are all about learning. In research, you get to learn things that are difficult to learn and have to be investigated first hand; we call this primary learning. Once these things are learned, they are never forgotten due to the devotion and dedication that research takes

Education on the other hand usually involves learning from someone else's experience; we call this secondary learning. This is the type of information you need to practice becoming familiar with and apply to your general experiences. PSBA is going to bring both of these to you.

Soon we will be setting up an observation colony to learn about waggle dances and experience them first hand. We will be using two feeding positions, alternating the food availability, and tracking the dances over different times of the day.

You can learn more about all the research and educational opportunities available at <http://www.pugetsoundbees.org/category/science-research/>

We're on the Web!

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Puget Sound Beekeepers
Association

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